

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

June 18, 2008

The Honorable John E. Potter
Postmaster General
U.S. Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20260-0010

Dear Postmaster General Potter:

As you may know, a CNN investigation found that almost \$85 million in household goods meant for Katrina and Rita victims was recently shifted to Federal and state agencies after sitting in warehouses for two years. Overall, it is my understanding from the report that 121 truckloads of material were given to Federal agencies, including the U.S. Postal Service. Many of these goods were purchased by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as "starter kits" for families living in trailers and others were donated by private companies.

While I understand the stated need to save taxpayer money being spent storing these materials, I am concerned that there are still ongoing needs for these types of goods in my state. I would like to respectfully request your assistance in reviewing supplies provided to your agency and redistributing unobligated goods to those still in need as a result of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

There is a particular and critical need for exactly these materials – especially household goods – by organizations dealing with the critical problem of homelessness as a result of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In New Orleans alone, we have almost 12,000 residents who are homeless, which is double the number we had pre-Katrina. Many of these people are desperately in need of permanent housing as they are elderly, disabled and mentally ill. As we work to provide basic housing for these individuals, it takes additional supplies to transform such housing into livable homes for these families.

I am currently working with the State of Louisiana, and several non-profit groups to identify specific needs for household supplies and toiletries and to ensure these groups are each properly registered with the appropriate agencies to be eligible for the federal surplus. While we work to secure needs assessments, I would respectfully request your assistance in conducting a complete inventory and identifying unobligated supplies within the U.S. Postal Service that may be made available to these groups.

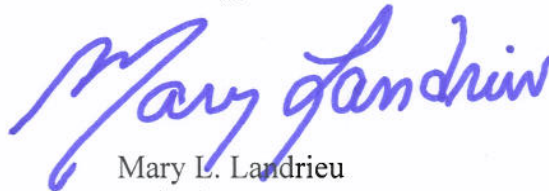
I believe that if we work together, we can get some of these surplus materials in the hands of the thousands of Gulf Coast families still in such desperate need for them. I look forward to working with you on this most important endeavor. Should you need additional information on this request, please contact Brian van Hook in my office at

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(202) 224-5824. He can also connect you with the appropriate state officials to coordinate transportation of any of the supplies that may be available.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Landrieu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mary" and last name "Landrieu" clearly legible.

Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator

MLL:brv/ams